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I never met Mark Daily. But I know him. And so do you. How could any of us know someone we never met? Let me explain. There are people in this world who are willing to lay down their lives to benefit a world they may never know. They do not obsess over the routine faculties of daily living that consume most of us. They have loftier plans; more ambitious goals. They are willing, even anxious, to leave the comforts of everyday life behind in order to fight to improve that life they may never enjoy.

By the grace of God, such people have always been in the midst of the rest of us. They were there at the Battle of Agincourt, when, as Shakespeare's Henry V tells us, those "gentlemen in England now a-bed" will "hold their manhood's cheap whiles any speaks that fought with us upon St. Crispin's day." They stood their ground in Fort McHenry so that Francis Scott Key could proclaim that our flag was still there. They volunteered from ages 18 to 61 in the Civil War to stop the scourge of slavery – from which they would not benefit, but which they knew was wrong. They won World War II and the Cold War. Now they fight Islamic fascism and terror.

We know these noble citizens because our lives would not exist as they do without them. Without them, we might be subjects of a king, ruled by Nazis, or fastened to the cruel yoke of communism. And without Lt. Daily, we might be converted to Islam by the sword, or suffer that sword. There is a poem I once heard read by Admiral Jeremiah Denton, a POW from Vietnam. His voice choked with tears as he said: *"It is the soldier, not the reporter, Who has given us freedom of the press. It is the soldier, not the poet, Who has given us freedom of speech. It is the soldier, not the campus organizer, Who has given us the freedom to demonstrate. It is the soldier who salutes the flag, Who serves beneath the flag, And whose coffin is draped by the flag, Who allows the protester to burn the flag."* Yes, I know Lt. Daily. And so do you. He is the one to whom we owe our liberty and all that we have. He has been there for us in the past. And he will be there in the future. He is a soldier. He is the defender of all we hold dear. He is our hero.

Lt. Daily posted a blog entry shortly before leaving for Iraq. In part, it said:

“Don’t forget that human beings have a responsibility to one another and that Americans will always have a responsibility to the oppressed. Don’t overlook the obvious reasons to disagree with the war, but don’t cheapen the moral aspects either. Assisting a formerly oppressed population in converting their torn society into a plural, democratic one is dangerous and difficult business, especially when being attacked and sabotaged from literally every direction. So if you have anything to say to me at the end of this reading, let it at least include ‘Good Luck.’”

We all know Lt. Mark J. Daily. We all stand in his debt.